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ABSTRACT

In fall 1988, an evaluative study was undertaken at the community colleges of the State University of New York (SUNY) to document the outcomes of contract courses delivered to local employers and to gain information that could lead to program improvement. Data were gathered through questionnaires mailed to the contact person of participating firms and to the program coordinator at each of the SUNY community colleges that offered contract courses from September 1986 through August 1987. Responses were received from 169 employers who were approved for 521 contract course training programs, and from all but two of the 27 community college contract course coordinators. Of the employers responding, 98% rated the courses "effective" or "very effective" and 82% indicated that participation had saved money for the organization. The total dollar values saved by employers were in excess of $1.2 million and ranged from $200 to $290,000 for individual participants. These projected savings were based on the cost of alternative training elsewhere, providing training in-house, or having no training occur if the college contract course program had not been available. Other benefits were described in terms of productivity, quality, increase of human assets, customer service, and awareness. Few recommendations for improvement were received; the one recommendation with a universal application was for an increase in the funding level. The major concerns expressed by program coordinators were related to the interpretation of operational guidelines and the disallowance of expenditures retroactively. Appendixes provide the survey instruments and selected employer comments regarding program effectiveness, alternatives if the programs were not available, and program improvement. (Author/JMC)

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IMPACT OF ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMS IN SUNY COMMUNITY COLLEGES: A STUDY OF CONTRACT COURSES

Prepared for

Office of Community Colleges
State University of New York Central Administration

by

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Community, technical, and junior colleges, across the nation, are in the midst of expanding their impressive portfolio of activities and mission. This new capability is reflected in the ability and willingness of these colleges to establish substantial collaborative arrangements between local employers and community colleges. One could almost compare this development with the results of the Morrill Act, which linked the nation's employer community and the agriculture branch of higher education.

In the case of the Morrill Act, the combination of farmers, agriculture extension agents, and university researchers has created an agriculture economy second to none. Alternately, community colleges are becoming the extension agent equivalent for information age employers. The labor market is being buffeted by demographic forces, technological change, and international trade pressures in such a manner as to optimize the importance of these colleges as ideal centers for human resource development.

These outside forces place a premium on a seasoned worker and education/training as a strategy for maintaining employee productivity. Employers and employees, increasingly, are turning to their local community college to mediate the educational requirements of a maturing workforce. However, the extent and quality of this energizing collaboration has not been sufficiently documented. That is why this study, mounted by the State University of New York (SUNY), is of such great importance. For, not only does New York State get a report card on its own efforts, but SUNY is also providing important documentation for the entire nation.

The difficulty with mapping this terrain is the dynamic and fluid nature of the relationships. The problem is akin to attempting a picture of a moving train -- the result will be a picture of where the train was. Nonetheless, a snapshot of the status of New York's college/employer partnerships is a major contribution.

In my judgment several salient results of this study merit comment. First and foremost, New York State policy makers now have important impact data as a guidepost to future decisions. Secondly, the report card is overwhelmingly positive. The bottom line is that employers received vitally important education/training at affordable rates. The study adequately documents the qualitative nature of that satisfaction and to some degree the cost savings. Moreover, the study honestly reflects the "warts and all" side of the data results. Thirdly, it contains "tip of the iceberg" type data. The revelation that fully a third of the firms would have instituted no training in the absence of a college effort is thought-provoking. The question not answered by this research is the critical demographic description of these businesses. The intuitive guess is that many of these are small firms with no education or training capability -- their only option being the community college.

We know that small businesses are the engine behind job creation in this country and yet we also know that small firms account for the highest rate of business failure. An ideal niche for a community college is serving the education/training needs of small businesses in order to assist them in running smoother. Conversely, the training needs of corporate giants who make such a significant impact on the economy of the State cannot be ignored. The SUNY study clearly indicates that the community colleges are serving a vital function for

one-third of their clientele (no matter who they are) and that the colleges are the preferable resource for the majority of firms being served. Clearly, the SUNY system has become a key service provider for the State's business community. In that regard, the colleges are providing a measure of stability to the local economic community and, in many cases, they are actually stimulants to local economic development.

A fourth and final comment--the data revealed that there probably exists a significant shortfall between the demand for employer/employee education and training and the ability of the colleges to fulfill that demand. The genesis of that conclusion is contained in the responses of contract course coordinators regarding marketing. An examination of the data revealed a rather passive attempt at marketing. A more careful analysis of the anecdotal remarks reflects a fear of marketing by administrators. A solid majority of contract officers were already working at capacity and were, consequently, afraid that aggressive marketing would overwhelm them with clients. This circumstance would appear to raise important funding questions for policy makers. What kind of public funding level commitment does the State of New York perceive to be adequate for the large and small business community in the area of human resource development?

Ultimately, when nations and states are competing for the market share in a global economy, the contribution of human resource renewal to the economic development equation becomes a pivotal factor. As New York State officials ponder the expenditure of precious public funds, such information as that contained in this study can make the difference between good policy and bad policy.

Dr. James F. McKenney
Associate Director
Keeping America Working Project
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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This evaluative study focused primarily on contract courses delivered by SUNY community colleges to local employers. The goals of the study were to better document the outcomes of these courses, as well as to gain information that could lead to program improvement. Data were gathered through mail surveys distributed to the coordinator at each of the SUNY community colleges that offered contract courses during the period of September 1986 through August 1987. Two questionnaires were used: one designed for the college program coordinator and the second directed at the contact person of the participating firm or agency. Responses were received from 169 employers who were approved for 521 contract course training programs, and from all but two of the community college contract course coordinators. This response rate provided an adequate database from which observations and judgments could be made.

The survey data lead conclusively to a finding that contract courses are meeting the objectives set for the program. Of the employers responding, 98% rated the courses effective or very effective and 82% indicated that participation has saved money for the organization. Other benefits listed included increased productivity of employees, an increase in the quality of work, improved customer service and greater employee awareness of business concepts such as efficiency. These outcomes for both employer and employee are direct evidence of the important contribution made by SUNY's community colleges to the economy of their respective regions and to the state.

The employer responses included many words of praise for the colleges and the concept of contract courses but there is always room for improvement in a program of this size. The relatively few recommendations for improvement were usually the result of a course-specific situation and were often offered to the college to facilitate a remedy rather than as a generalized complaint about all programs. The one recommendation with a universal application was for an increase in the funding level.

The major concern expressed by college respondents was in regard to the retroactive disallowance of expenditures. Clarifying this situation is seen as crucial in terms of the incentives for the colleges to continue to participate and/or expand their economic development activities.

The future for contract course activity is bright. The allocation for contract courses was increased in the state budget for 1988-89 and most college coordinators foresee a growing market potential for this kind of programming in their service area. Market demand coupled with efficient and effective service delivery should result in continuing fulfillment of the program's goal, that of making a positive and significant impact on the economic vitality of New York State. Contract courses are another reason why the public investment in community colleges is good business.

IMPACT OF ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMS IN SUNY COMMUNITY COLLEGES: A STUDY OF CONTRACT COURSES

INTRODUCTION

Service to business and industry is, by definition, a mission of the comprehensive community college. In the last decade, economic development has become a major goal of the State of New York, the State Education Department[1] and an increasingly important function of SUNY's community colleges[2]. Historically community colleges have been an important source of technically trained employees for local businesses. Research has shown that statewide nearly nine out of ten graduates in occupational and technical programs find employment within the respective college sponsor area or the vocational education planning region[3]. In addition to the regular full-time degree program students, many citizens attend college part-time. During 1985-86 there were nearly 240,000 registrations in non-credit courses, most vocational in nature, at community colleges.

Community colleges support local business and industry in several ways beyond the usual degree programs and courses (see Appendix A). Since 1981, community colleges have been allowed by state law to contract with businesses, unions and non-profit organizations to design and deliver firm-specific training and receive State aid on an FTE

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[1]Occupational and Continuing Education Capsule Report, "Education and Economic Development." Albany, NY: New York State Education Department, June 1987 (87-08-CR-A).

[2]Education, Key to Economic Growth. Albany, NY: State Education Department, September 1987.

[3]Geographic Mobility--Postsecondary Occupational Education Graduates. Albany, NY: Two-Year College Development Center, State University of New York at Albany, September 1983.

basis. State funds attached to this plan have allowed colleges to offer high quality training, tailored to a company's needs, at a fraction of the usual cost. These programs, commonly known as contract courses, have become an increasingly important economic development mechanism. Since their inception the number of industries served and courses offered has steadily increased. In 1986-87, 27 community college participated, offering approximately 1,100 courses to over 88,000 employees from approximately 500 local employers[4]. Because of the apparent success of contract courses, the Legislature has again increased the funding level to more than $8 million for the 1988-89 fiscal year.

In the late fall of 1987, the Two-Year College Development Center, in cooperation with the Office of Community Colleges, undertook a study of these training programs to better document the outcomes as well as to gain information for program improvement.

METHODOLOGY AND DATA COLLECTION PROCEDURES

The Office of Community Colleges, State University of New York Central Administration has administrative responsibilities for contract courses, Youth Internship Program (YIP), Structural Unemployment Retraining Program (SURP), and the State aided non-credit programs. YIP and SURP are small programs in terms of funds and numbers of community colleges involved. State aidable non-credit programs, while designed to increase vocational skills, are more student-focused rather than employer-focused. During discussion with SUNY Central staff, it was

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[4]SUNY Community College Contract Course Activity Report, September 1986-August 1987. Albany, NY: Office of Community Colleges, State University of New York Central Administration, February 1988.

determined that the greatest need for evaluative feedback was clearly linked to contract courses. Specific information needs were then considered.

Assisting Two-Year College Development Center and SUNY Central Office staff in determining potential data needs was James F. McKenney, who served as external consultant. Dr. McKenney is Associate Director of Keep America Working, a project of the Association of Community College Trustees and the American Association of Community and Junior Colleges. As consultant, Dr. McKenney also reviewed survey results previous to final reporting and made recommendations regarding format and focus. His formal comments appear in the Foreword to this report.

Data Collection and Source

The primary technique for data collection was a mail survey consisting of questionnaires to the community colleges and to firms using contract courses for training. Two questionnaires were designed, field-tested at two Capital District colleges, and revised based on feedback from the pilot sites.

One instrument, the College Reaction Form, was directed to the coordinator of contract courses at the college. Information was sought regarding need or market potential in the next two-three years for contract courses and State aidable non-credit vocational courses. This questionnaire also sought suggestions or recommendations for policy or procedures at the State level that would enhance or assist local economic development efforts.

The second instrument, the Employer Feedback Sheet, was designed to collect employer opinions regarding program effectiveness and impact on the firm of the contract courses provided by the local college. This questionnaire also sought suggestions for any changes regarding contract course training from community colleges. The two questionnaires constitute Appendix B.

The College Reaction Form and multiple copies of the Employer Reaction Form (in sufficient numbers for each employer served by the college during the period of September 1986 - August 1987) were mailed to the presidents at the 27 SUNY community colleges providing contract courses. The cover letter requested that the appropriate college staff member (coordinator of contract courses) complete the College Reaction Form, distribute an Employee Feedback Sheet to the appropriate person(s) at each firm and collect the Employer Forms once completed. Since the colleges had developed a working relationship with their local firms, the decision was made to have the 27 college coordinators distribute the questionnaires to the employers.

Usable responses were received from 169 companies and agencies which represented 521 courses or training programs, approximately half of the courses approved during the time period of September 1986 - August 1987. The response rate by colleges to the College Reaction Form was 92%. While the goal of survey research is always a 100%, experience indicates that this response rate provides an adequate data base from which judgments can be drawn.

SUMMARY OF DATA RESULTS

College Reactions

Data results relative to contract and State aidable non-credit courses from the college perspective are based on the returns from coordinators at 25 SUNY community colleges.

Contract Courses. The need or market potential for contract courses during the next few years was perceived as increasing by 87.5% of the coordinators. Although no college expected the market potential to decrease, 12.5% foresaw the need remaining at about the same level as 1986-87. The comments given to support these opinions can be summed in three categories. 1) A number indicated that program success increased demand. As more companies experienced positive results, the requests for training programs will increase. 2) Several respondents indicated that the local economic upswing, increased business start-ups and/or increased employee skill needs will continue to drive training demands. 3) Increased experience and effectiveness of the college in marketing the training programs also tends to increase future demand.

Comments given to support a view of no-growth included a lack of industry in the region, local business uncertainties and a lack of new businesses moving into the area.

Aidable Non-Credit Courses. The need or market potential for State aidable non-credit vocational courses was estimated to be increasing by 96% of the respondents. The lone dissenter saw the need remaining about the same as last year but commented that the demand could increase if companies decide to fund employees to take courses rather than enter into a contract course arrangement.

Many respondents saw their estimates of increased market demand linked to a continually increasing need by many employees for skill upgrading to keep or obtain better jobs. Technological changes and increasing effectiveness of the college in providing training were also cited as causes. Non-credit courses can serve a skill development need across several firms when a single company may not have employees in sufficient numbers to warrant a contract course. Several respondents commented that if more support for administration of these courses were available, marketing of non-credit courses could be improved.

State Level Procedures/Policy. Over half of the coordinators expressed concern that something must be done to settle the audit problems and controversy regarding State aid and the use of Employer Specific Skills Training Grant funds as matching dollars. If this situation is not clarified, many respondents feel it will become a major disincentive to operating contract courses and would significantly curb this activity. In this respect the actions of the Comptroller's Office are being viewed as counter to State and SUNY goals of promoting economic development.

Many coordinators called for continued and increased funding for contract courses. About 15% requested an increase in marketing assistance from the State level. An equal number suggested that equipment purchases and advertising expenses become separate approvable items in addition to the FTE support. Individual requests included: simplify the economic development initiatives in terms of local and regional boards, agencies, and councils, and a call for more exchange of information and opportunities for staff contacts among colleges.

There were several suggestions for more aid for targeted populations, employee upgrading, youth at risk and adult retraining. There were also several remarks complimenting State level administration.

Summary of College Reactions

Nearly all respondents felt that the need or market potential for contract courses and aidable non-credit vocational courses will increase in the next few years. These expectations are based in part on the notion that past successes increase the demand for training opportunities, and in part on the continuing need for employee skill upgrading.

The primary concerns associated with contract courses are related to the interpretation of operational guidelines and the disallowance of expenditures retroactively by the Office of the Comptroller. Once the audit situation is clarified without affecting the incentives for colleges to participate, contract course programming should continue to grow. Agreement has been reached by State University of New York and the Comptroller that beginning in the fall of 1988, assuming settlement on an indirect cost model, no disallowance will be made retroactively or for the current audit period, but will be prospective only.

SUNY's administration of the programs appears to be appreciated and there were suggestions for more assistance from the State level in terms of increased support/funding and promotional activities. If the many types of training opportunity programs can be simplified, coordinated and support continued, the colleges and regional agencies should be able to increase their service to business and industry and continue to fulfill the State policies regarding economic development.

Employer Reactions

The following findings are based on the questionnaire responses provided by 169 employer representatives.

Effectiveness of Contract Courses. In rating the effectiveness of contract programs, 63.3% were seen as very effective and 35.3% generally effective. Thus 98.6% rated the programs positively compared to 1.4% that found them to be less than effective or disappointing. These ratings of effectiveness were briefly explained in a number of ways, subsequently summarized:

28.7% Effective, relevant, tailored to needs of company, practical, worthwhile, good

12.4% Gains and upgrading in employee skills

11.6% Positive participant feedback

6.2% Provided motivation and confidence to employees

4.7% Improved employee performance, productivity, quality and ability

4.7% Strong instructor, excellent program administration, professional trainers

3.9% Improved interpersonal and communication skills by employees

2.3% Awareness assessment of strengths and weaknesses of employees

1.6% Helped reduce turnover rate

Comments provided by firms further illustrate the basis of ratings and the strength of these programs. The following examples are representative of the feedback provided by responding firms:

- Our 1987 program has been extremely important in upgrading the skills of people in both supervisory and technical roles--better enabling us to compete in our marketplace.

  Crellin, Inc.

- This is the first time we have had training conducted in a first rate professional manner. Excellent coordination and training for the employees.

  Nabisco Brands, Inc.

- We hired over 150 people in our electronics assembly operation during late 1986 and 1987. The community college course helped us bring these people to a minimum level of proficiency.

  Welch/Allyn, Inc.

Other selected comments relating to effectiveness are attached to this report as Appendix C.

Problems or disappointments in the courses were noted by a few employers (less than 5% of respondents) who had had a negative experience with a course either in terms of cost, instructor effectiveness or a lag in preparation time. Their reactions follow in order of frequency:

- Too advanced, too elementary, not comprehensive; wide range of abilities with too little time
- Inconsistent course quality, difficult timeframe, programs too long
- Company was unaware of materials, content or instructor ahead of time
- Poor, unqualified instructor
- Other than program, facilities are limited
- Delay in knowledge application to job functions
- Some portions of course repetitive

Implications of Training Opportunities. Firms were asked to indicate the implications if the college training opportunities had not been available. The projected probable actions are summed as follows:

33.9% We would have trained with our own staff
32.6% No training would have occurred
26.2% We would have purchased training elsewhere
 2.2% Employees would have been laid off or replaced
 5.1% Other

About a third of the companies that responded to this item provided no explanation concerning their probable actions. Comments given to support the projected actions included: "would be done in-house even though productivity might be reduced" (14.5%), "college assistance makes it smoother" (14.5%), "would seek training elsewhere" (8.9%), and "would involve fewer employees and limited training" (7.6%). Other individualized comments dealt with potential impact to the company, the cost of training elsewhere and the format of the training. Selected statements describing possible actions in greater detail are listed in Appendix D.

Other less favorable comments, explanations or recommendations (representing less than six firms) included: "company assisted, trained faculty, co-sponsored training, college provided support only," "did it ourselves ultimately," "needs follow-through and ongoing training," "request more supervisory and small business training," "company contracts for use of facilities only," and "concern for costs in local area."

More than 82% of the employers indicated that the programs had saved them money; 10.6% did not feel that they saved money and 7.4% gave no response.

The Perceived Value of the Training. Respondents were asked to indicate what their training alternatives would have been had the community college programs not been available, and to place a dollar value on the training actually received. A total of 44 employers gave monetary values of the programs. As shown in the following summary, the dollar values estimated by those employers were in excess of $1.2 million and ranged from $200 to $290,000.

Estimated Dollar Value of Training

Alternatives to Community College Programs	Number of Responding Employers	Range of Program Size by FTE	Range of Estimated Savings Per Firm	Total Estimated Savings Value of Community College Programs
Purchase training elsewhere	20	.60 - 28.5 FTE	$ 1,000 - 100,000	$270,250
Training with own staff	15	.16 - 113.6 FTE	$ 200 - 290,000	$714,700
No training would have occurred	9	.09 - 4.72 FTE	$ 3,500 - 100,000	$257,100
TOTAL	44	.09 - 113.6 FTE	$ 200 - 290,000	$1,242,050

When a college applies for budgetary support for a contract course, information to be supplied includes the planned instructional cost, the amount, if any, to be charged to the firm and the projected full-time equivalent (FTE) figure of the course. These data were examined in an attempt to make more meaningful comparisons between the perceived value of the courses reported on the survey and the budgeted dollar value of these programs. However, this analysis was abandoned after discovering that the requests for certain sets of information were not interpreted consistently on all course applications. Comparative analyses, therefore, would not have been accurate in all cases. This finding has resulted in further considerations regarding the need and best strategy for collection of consistent program data by the Office of Community Colleges.

Almost 20% of employers indicated that benefits other than dollars were realized from the courses including:

- Increased productivity, level of service, awareness
- Increased human assets, better educated/motivated employees
- Increased awareness of our facilities
- Improved customer service skills, customers treated better
- Improved company's image through improved community service speakers
- Benefited mankind

A few employers responded to the benefit question more critically with comments such as ... "not enough students to cover expense," "quantitative impact difficult due to cost variables," and "not quantitatively measurable."

Statements given by employers to explain benefits are represented by the following selected sample:

- Since the training was perceived as a very positive thing, I am sure the employee turnover rate was affected. We also noted that my company became profitable for the first time in its history as it began receiving training from the community college.

  Robotic Vision Systems, Inc.

- It is extremely difficult to quantify by the benefits derived. However, in general terms, the assistance tendered was of significant benefit to the company in respect of a noticeable increase in the awareness of need for each individual employee to strive to improve the efficiency and quality of his work effort. This has been a discernible positive impact on product quality.

  Hiross, Inc.

- The training has greatly improved the level of service. This is intangible as a figure, but an important point.

  NYS Sheriff's Association

- It increased awareness; the college provided exposure of an established educational facility to educators and community members who utilize our facility.

  Hamot Medical Center
  Adolescent Care Unit

Employer Recommendations

Employers were asked to recommend actions to improve contract courses. More than 28% indicated that no changes were necessary and/or that the process should continue unchanged. Others offered supportive comments such as the following:

- Need changes from company, communications
- Allows flexibility in small community with few resources, flexible and responsible
- More training scheduled as a result
- Contact people excellent
- Super-cooperative, immediate response and professional
- Staff helpful and paperwork limited
- Professionally presented and rewarding
- One asset why moved to area
- Excellent reputation for providing good courses
- Could not achieve training goals without college, job retention particularly

Specific statements representing the type of feedback given by individual employers include the following:

- We were very pleased and the only limitations to our programs are ones that we have placed on ourselves. Changes we might need must come from within our company.

  Charter Supply Co., Inc.

- The community college has been an excellent site for our impact training and we are extremely pleased with the professionalism of the college staff who work closely with us during the preparation and actual training. We would not change a thing.

  Hamot Medical Center - Adolescent Care Unit

- The college contract type courses allow us much more flexibility in training our people with us living in such a small community. There are very few outside sources.

  Falconer Glass Industries

- Any changes or modifications are implemented immediately. We have found both faculty and administration to be super-cooperative to work with us. The community college personnel have given new meaning to the word "co-operative." They truly serve their community.

  General Motors Training Center

- Union National Bank is so very satisfied with the efforts of those at the college, from inception through instruction, that our purposes for such program have been met. Repeat performances would be conducted with no recommended changes.

  Union National Bank

- We believe the program is operated in a very professional manner. The college staff has been very cooperative and helpful in establishing programs designed to meet our business needs.

  The Warwick Savings Bank

- The only change I would have made would have been better direction given by the company. If any improvement needs to be made, it lies within the obligations of our own company and its communication of expectations.

  Delco Products Division
  of General Motors

- Keep them coming! A great way to improve skills and moderate the cost of training!

  Central Federal Savings Bank

- I would like to comment on the professionalism and cooperation evidenced by the community college personnel with whom we have dealt. Working with them has been a pleasure.

  Algarex Corporation

A number of respondents offered specific suggestions regarding improvement of contract courses. Comments tended to group themselves into four categories: improved facilities and equipment, improved

instructor expertise, shortened timeline or more flexible schedule of planning and implementation, and suggestions for specific adjustments to accommodate individual firm problems that ranged from class minimums to college credit for employees who supervise interns. Those individual suggestions are listed in Appendix E.

Summary of Employer Reactions

More than 98% of the employers were positive about community college contract programs. These firms overwhelmingly found the courses to be very effective and to result in positive outcomes for their employees and organization.

Many firms identified one outcome to be the dollar value and/or savings to the firm. These projected savings were based on purchasing alternative training elsewhere, providing training in-house, or having no training occur if the college contract course program had not been available. Other benefits were described in terms of productivity, quality, increase of human assets, customer service, and awareness.

Appendices C-E list selected comments from employers given to each questionnaire item. These statements focus upon three areas: 1) the working relationship between college and firm, 2) the outcome, value or benefit to the company, and 3) suggestions for improvement in the system. The overwhelming majority of the comments are laudatory and many suggestions included ways in which both the firm and the college could work more effectively together.

Less than 2% of the employers were generally negative in their responses. Often these were tied to specific factors such as program costs, course planning time or instructor competence.

Recommendations for improvement usually focused on more funding, updating of equipment/curricula, greater efficiency in planning, reduction of the implementation lag, and improved instructor skill. Almost 35% of the employers indicated that no changes were needed and/or offered additional supportive comments of the college program.

In summary, the community college contract programs are viewed as effective by the involved employers. Benefits to employees are identifiable. These in turn result in benefits to the firm, and ultimately to the economy of New York State.

CONCLUDING STATEMENT

This evaluative study focused primarily on contract courses delivered by SUNY community colleges to local employers. The goals of the study were to better document the outcomes of these courses, as well as to gain information that could lead to program improvement.

The survey data lead conclusively to a finding that the contract courses are meeting the objectives set for the program. Of the employers responding, 98% rated the courses effective or very effective and 82% indicated that participation has saved money for the organization. Other benefits listed included increased productivity of employees, an increase in the quality of work, improved customer service and greater employee awareness of business concepts such as efficiency. These outcomes for both employer and employee are direct evidence of the important contribution made by SUNY's community colleges to the economy of their respective regions and to the state.

The employer responses included many words of praise for the colleges and the concept of contract courses but there is always room for improvement in a program of this size. The relatively few

recommendations for improvement were usually the result of a course-specific situation and were often offered to the college to facilitate a remedy rather than as a generalized complaint about all programs. The one recommendation with a universal application was for an increase in the funding level.

The major concern expressed by college respondents was in regard to the retroactive disallowance of expenditures. Clarifying this situation is seen as crucial in terms of the incentives for the colleges to continue to participate and/or expand their economic development activities.

The future for contract course activity is bright. The allocation for contract courses was increased in the state budget for 1988-89 and most college coordinators foresee a growing market potential for this kind of programming in their service area. Market demand coupled with efficient and effective service delivery should result in continuing fulfillment of the program's goal, that of making a positive and significant impact on the economic vitality of New York State. Contract courses are another reason why the public investment in community colleges is good business.

APPENDIX A

SUNY Community College Economic Development Programs

Principal economic development programs operating at SUNY community colleges are summarized below.

- New York State is a leader in non-credit instruction, committing state aid (more than $15 million last year) per FTE student enrolled in vocational, remedial and community service offerings. About 80 percent are in vocational courses. More than 200,000 New Yorkers took non-credit courses at SUNY community colleges in 1985-86.

- Most community colleges are directly involved with Private Industry Councils (PIC) and are important providers of training carried out under the Job Training Partnership Act (JTPA).

- About half of the State's Development Centers for Business (DCB) are at community colleges.

- A State-funded grant program, the Youth Internship Program (YIP), is operated at seven community colleges. It is targeted at out-of-work and out-of-school youth in designated regions of high youth employment.

- The Structural Unemployment Retraining Program (SURP) was created by the State to provide retraining for workers who have lost or who are liable to lose their jobs due to industries changing from manufacturing to service or technology oriented fields.

- The Employer-Specific Skills Training Program (ESSTG) is designed to upgrade skills to meet changing workplace demands. ESSTG is operated by the State Education Department through the ten Regional Education Centers for Economic Development, and has become an important part of the local training support options that colleges may put together to serve employer needs.

For further information see "SUNY and Economic Development," by John W. Kalas in The News. Albany, NY: State University of New York, Spring 1988, Vol. 17, No. 1.

APPENDIX B

SUNY COMMUNITY COLLEGE TRAINING PROGRAMS

College Reaction Form

_____ _____

College Person Responding

I. In your service area, do you expect the need or market potential for contract courses in the next two to three years to:

___be about the same as last year ___increase ___decrease

Please explain: _____

_____

_____

II. What is your estimate of the need or market potential for state aidable noncredit vocational courses in the next two to three years?

___about the same as last year ___increasing ___decreasing

Please explain: _____

_____

_____

III. What suggestions or recommendations would you make regarding state level policy or procedures that would enhance your economic development efforts?

_____

_____

_____

IV. Other comments or reactions: _____

_____

_____

----------Thank you for your cooperation.----------

Please return to: Charles Burns or David VanNortwick
Office of Community Colleges
State University Central Administration
State University Plaza
Albany, New York 12246

SUNY COMMUNITY COLLEGE CONTRACT COURSE

Employer Feedback Sheet

The Office of Community Colleges, SUNY Central Administration, is collecting information in order to better describe the impact of contract courses provided by SUNY Community Colleges for local employers during the period September 1986-August 1987. A listing of courses approved for your company is enclosed. Please complete the form and return it to your contact person at the college. Thank you.

- -

A) Please rate the impact on your company of the training program(s) provided by your SUNY community college. [If multiple programs, indicate the number of programs that fall in each rating category; for example, 1 disappointing; 3 very effective.]

_____disappointing
_____less than effective
_____generally effective
_____very effective

Please explain your rating(s): _____

_____

_____

B) If the community college training opportunity had not been available, what would the results have been for your company? [For multiple programs, respond as in A) above.]

_____We would have purchased training elsewhere.
_____We would have trained with our own staff.
_____No training would have occurred.
_____Employees would have been laid off or replaced.
_____Other, specify: _____

Please explain: _____

_____

_____

C) Did the community college training program save your firm money this past year?

_____Yes _____No

If YES, please answer at least one of the following:

1. The estimated dollar value of the training to the firm is $_____
2. I am unable to estimate the dollar value of the training but the general financial impact on the company (increased productivity and/or increased income, assets, etc.) may be estimated as $_____.
3. I am unable to estimate the value or other financial impact of the training on the firm. _____
4. There has been no similar training in the past. _____

If NO, please explain: _____

_____

_____

D) Please describe any changes that you suggest regarding contract course training opportunities from community colleges.

_____

_____

_____

_____

(Use back of sheet as necessary.)

- -

_____ _____

Company/Organization Name and Title of Person Responding

Thank you for your assistance.

APPENDIX C

Employer Statements Regarding Program Course Effectiveness

- Our 1987 program has been extremely important in upgrading the skills of people in both supervisory and technical roles--better enabling us to compete in our marketplace.

  Crellin, Inc.

- The program that was presented to the management staff was extremely beneficial in helping to determine the weaknesses of our staff, and to build a stronger management team.

  Wilcox Press, Inc.

- Assistance, coordination, timeliness and administration provide the programs to be the best I have ever seen or been involved in.

  Dahlstrom Manufacturing Company

- A substantial increase in quality and productivity.

  Great Lakes Color Printing

- Training was effective in reducing our turnover rate.

  M. Wile & Co., Inc.

- Excellent instructor and very effective presentation.

  Alcas Cutlery Corporation

- Over 3,000 firefighters from across New York State were provided with necessary safety skills necessary for providing state-of-the-art fire protection for their communities.

  New York State Association of Fire Chiefs

- Course content, expertise of instructor, and reception by Union National Bank staff all exceeded expectations.

  Union National Bank

- Made us more aware of the "hidden" talents and strengths of our employees as well as aware of those employees lack of "assumed" strengths and talents.

  PDJ Components

- The anxiety many employees felt toward using a computer has greatly diminished. We are seeing an enthusiastic increase in the number of employees using our new computer system.

  Arden Hill Hospital/Life Care Center

- This is the first time we have had training conducted in a first rate professional manner. Excellent coordination and training for the employees.

  Nabisco Brands, Inc.

- Supervision is requesting more training.

  Bell Aerospace Textron

- The training in Imaging and Optics was exceptionally effective.

  Eastman Kodak Company

- Good instructor, testing very adequate, information necessary for the healthy operation of the kitchen.

  Marriott Hotels

- We hired over 150 people into our electronics assembly operation in late 1986 and 1987. The community college course helped us bring these people to a minimum level of proficiency.

  Welch/Allyn, Inc.

- All the trainers demonstrated a high level of professionalism, knowledge and commitment. Programs were practical so newly acquired skills were easily transferred to the workplace.

  The NPD Group

- The program provided information to various levels introducing the usefulness of computers to Ridgewood Savings Bank. As a result, four additional personal computers were purchased in areas which did not previously have them.

  Ridgewood Savings Bank

- It seemed to suit the need perfectly. It was well presented, not overwhelming or intimidating. The participants could respond (hands-on) while being instructed. We came out with specific knowledge of the program, and experience in using it.

  Hudson Audio Video Enterprises, Inc.

- Notable improvement in the quality of technical and marketing presentations to potential customers.

  Hazeltine Corporation

APPENDIX D

Employer Statements Regarding Alternate Actions If Community College Programs Were Unavailable

- In today's environment of reduced staffing, it is not always possible to have in-house resources available to conduct training, especially in terms of time for preparation and delivery.

  MRC Bearings, Inc.

- We would have had to provide the training at a less desirable site and one that was not part of an educational setting.

  Hamot Medical Center

- We did not have the capacity to develop the specialized programs in-house, nor was there funding to "buy" other training from consultants

  Alltel/Northeast, Inc.

- We would only train the absolute must programs and leave other items, although needed, undone.

  Bush Industries

- But in a very limited, amateurish fashion. Union National could not have disciplined itself for such an extensive venture without the assistance of the community college.

  Union National Bank

- Our budget for training of this type is quite small and if it had not been funded we simply would not have had funds to cover it.

  Mechanical Technology, Inc.

- The mandated training would have been done in "house". The quality of the trainers would not have been as good. The non-mandated courses would not have been held.

  NYS Sheriff's Association

- We would not have been able to purchase training for that many personnel nor would they probably have attended off-site training to that extent.

  Millbrook Kitchens

- Would have been extremely expensive/prohibiting us from purchasing elsewhere and employing a director of training, i.e. facilitator/trainer.

  Lloyd's Shopping Centers

- 1) With the rapid growth and lean personnel, it is unlikely that all supervisors who attended the Institute for Business, Industry and Government (IBIG) course could have taken the time away from work for training elsewhere.

  OSRAM Corp.

- If the Community College program had not been available, the bank would have had to look outside the community for training. This would have been more costly and perhaps less effective. Since training was provided in a local setting, it made it easier for employees to get to the training place without disrupting their personal time.

  Warwick Savings Bank

- We would have and could have provided our own training, but felt that an outside agency would present a broader based, non partisan program, keeping an impersonal level.

  Assn. of Office Personnel

- Without the assistance of the Community College it would have been a financial and administrative burden. The resources were excellent.

  Assn. for Volunteer Administration

- The excellent resources and support from the college greatly improved our overall training goals

  Mt. St. Mary's Hospital

- Although we would have purchased elsewhere, we would not have been able to send as many staff.

  Abbey Industries

- This supervisor training program replaced very informal training on the job!!

  Metropolitan Club Managers Assn.

- Without college assistance, the level (amount) of training would have been less.

  Harrison Radiator Division, GMC

- Possibly send one or two employees per semester to outside training sources. Could not have trained more than one or two employees at outside sources for same money we can hold community college contract courses for 15-20 employees on site.

  Hazeltine Corporation

APPENDIX E

Employer Comments and Recommendations Regarding Program Improvement

- Improved facilities, update equipment
- Seek grant potential to increase funds and allowances
- More instructional rooms
- An instructional room per employer
- Essential to know credentials and instructor performance prior to classes
- Instructor, while knowledgeable, should have approached us with examples pertaining to our company
- First-time instructor, thus would have been more beneficial if experienced instructor
- More instructors available for classes as number of technicians needing training is growing so rapidly
- Instructors need background for teaching in industrial setting

- Quicker availability, streamline procedures, shorten start-up; as courses are offered, prepare one or two page summaries/course outline for sharing with prospective firms, provide listing of available courses
- An advantage to cyclical businesses if one month prior notice was possible for scheduling a class, thus would not have to lay-off employees during bad weather, coordinate and establish program needs/schedules in advance; be proactive and offer rather than wait for businesses to ask
- Additional training in management if funding available; more courses for technicians

- Class minimums too restrictive
- More involvement in pre-registration of students
- Lead time hard to work with: grants in July, feedback in October and Instructors in January/February with little time left for scheduling
- Provide college credits to agency employees who provide internships to college students
- Develop competency-based training to establish that employees can perform the task for which trained
- Instructors and curriculae be more in tune with industry needs--academia tends to base learning on idealized vision of business but we deal in realities
- More time allocated to course development for nontraditional students
- Greater sell towards business community in all divisions, that workshops goals are bottom-line oriented and participants are motivated high-paid executives, thus more attention to work-shop design including timely handouts, group participation, faster pace, assessment of group's skill level, etc.
- Shorter courses scheduled other than late evening hours
- College provide lab work
- Develop cost effective in-factory programs
- Continue close liaison
- More evaluation
- Increase linkages among several companies and offer courses not available to just one
- Delay was costly and demotivating but was eventually effective

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